



Constitution History & Background

September 2007



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History of Project

- General Board charged special committee in 2004
- Initial objective was to revise current constitution
 - After careful consideration, committee recommended replacement of current with new document
- Current constitution was originally written in 1997
- Rigorous process deployed
 - Research other churches
 - Information gathering from Board and congregation
 - Many committee meetings to work through issues
 - Over 1,000 hours dedicated by the committee over a 3-year period
- Proposed Constitution presented to General Board in March 2007
 - Various meetings have taken place since then to gain understanding and consensus on the proposed document



Constitution Committee

- Diverse leaders from across the congregation
 - Chuck Osicka, chair
 - Barry Lyerly
 - Ann Hajicek
 - Chris Feil
 - Kim Sylvan
 - Pip Gledhill

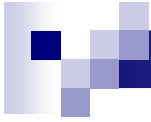
- Ex-officio members
 - Kory & Tim



Goal of Committee

- Single goal of committee:

Bring the constitution in line with the reality of how the church was operating and to facilitate the fulfilling of our vision – *“to be a thriving congregation that changes lives through Christ.”*



Guiding Principles

1. Provide more flexibility in leadership
2. Meet time challenges of today's families
3. Streamline the church organization
4. Change the "church year" to better coordinate with programs
5. Allow people to use their gifts in their areas of interest without requiring additional responsibilities
6. Model faithful stewardship of resources through the use of sabbaticals
7. Add flexibility to Constitution and By-Laws by creating Standard Operating Procedures that address specific committee and board duties and responsibilities



Why Did the Committee Recommend Changes?

1. Reduce number of meetings while increasing the opportunities to serve
2. Allow people to serve where their interests are, while not requiring them to serve in other ways
3. Create an opportunity for the Program and Ministry leaders to meet to brainstorm on the future of the church
4. Move to a calendar that better matches the flow of the year
5. Allow people to serve the church for a significant length of time, while ensuring there was time for rest and renewal built into the process



Benefits of Proposed Changes

1. Committee chairs can focus on leading their committee, without the additional responsibility of serving on the General Board
2. Representatives on the General Board have a genuine interest in the business operations of the church, making the governing body more effective and efficient
3. Ministries Council will focus solely on the ministries of the church
4. Recruitment of leaders is moved from holiday time to spring time, flowing more naturally with the calendar year
5. People can serve up to five years in a leadership position, providing more continuity, and every leader will get a much-needed sabbatical



How do things get done?

- Ministries Council is responsible for the programs and ministries of the church.
- General Board is responsible for the business of the church.
- Four members of the General Board are also on the Ministries Council (not including the ministers).
- The General Board can choose at any time to attend a Ministries Council meeting, and in fact may choose to do so at certain strategic times of the year (e.g., around budgeting time).
- The Board and Ministries Council can work together at joint meetings to do long-range and yearly planning in order to facilitate a variety of input and thorough communication.



What has changed?



General Board

■ Before

- ☐ 51 positions
- ☐ Attempted to deal with all business and ministry issues in one meeting
- ☐ Met 10-11 times a year, almost always on a Monday evening
- ☐ Leaders were required to serve on the Board, regardless of their interest or gifts in that area

■ After

- ☐ 12 positions
- ☐ Focus narrowed to the business of the church
- ☐ Has the potential to meet less often, and at different times
- ☐ Board members elected from specific groups or boards, or directly from the congregation

■ Benefits

- ☐ Smaller board allows for more in-depth discussion and participation
- ☐ Board can focus on the business of the church
- ☐ Builds in flexibility for frequency and scheduling of meetings
- ☐ Ensures those serving on the Board want to do so, increasing attendance and participation



Ministries Council

A group comprised of all the committee chairs which meets at least quarterly to plan the church's programs and ministries

■ Before

- ☐ Program Council met quarterly for calendar scheduling
- ☐ Often poorly attended

■ After

- ☐ Ministries Council will meet quarterly for brainstorming, program planning, and communication purposes
- ☐ Because this is the only meeting most committee chairs will be required to attend, attendance at Ministry Council meetings will be better

■ Benefits

- ☐ Ministries Council will be more substantial than Program Council and will have a more comprehensive focus
- ☐ Number of meetings for committee chairs will be reduced, which will increase attendance



Chair, vice-chair and recording secretary of the General board

■ Before

- ☐ Holders of these positions were required to hold an additional board position.

■ After

- ☐ These positions will be directly elected from the congregation

■ Benefits

- ☐ Holders of these important positions will be able to focus on their responsibilities without serving in another role
- ☐ Makes recruiting for these positions easier



Deacons

■ Before

- ☐ All deacons elected to and serve on the General Board; only a minority of deacons usually attended
- ☐ Required to take sabbatical after three years

■ After

- ☐ Deacons only responsibility will be serving on Sunday morning
- ☐ Deacons will be appointed positions and will not automatically serve on the General Board
- ☐ Terms for deacons will not be subject to sabbaticals; deacons will have the opportunity each year to say whether or not they would like to participate

■ Benefits

- ☐ Deacons won't be required to serve on the General Board
- ☐ Will make recruiting deacons easier
- ☐ Enlarges the pool of deacons for serving



Committee Chairs

■ Before

- ☐ Automatically served on the General Board
- ☐ Were not allowed co-chairs to assist them in serving
- ☐ Had to attend an average of 14-15 meetings a year (Board and Program Council)

■ After

- ☐ Serve on the Ministries Council (only serve on the General Board if elected as Ministries Council representative)
- ☐ Committees can have co-chairs
- ☐ Only attend a minimum of 4 Ministries Council meetings

■ Benefits

- ☐ Allows committee chairs to focusing on their area of responsibility without worrying about Board participation
- ☐ Co-chairs allows workload to be shared
- ☐ Number of meetings drastically reduced



Standard Operating Procedures

■ Before

- Didn't exist; most policies and procedures were listed in the bylaws (which required a congregational vote to change) or kept by each board/committee

■ After

- SOPs will contain the policies and procedures of each committee
- SOPs will only require Board approval to be changed
- All SOPs will be easily accessible for communication and cross-referencing

■ Benefits

- Builds in flexibility to governing the church
- Makes it easier for boards/committees to adjust how they operate



Church Calendar

■ Before

- ☐ Jan. 1 to Dec. 31 operating schedule
- ☐ Leaders were changed in the middle of the church year (which runs from Sept. to May)
- ☐ Recruiting often took place during the busy holiday season (Oct.-Dec.)

■ After

- ☐ July 1 to June 31 operating schedule
- ☐ Leaders will take office in July
- ☐ Recruiting will take place in the spring

■ Benefits

- ☐ Program year will mirror the church year
- ☐ Leaders will have July and August to begin planning for the start of the church year, and will lead for the entirety of that church year
- ☐ Recruiting will be made easier